

Memorandum

To: Associate Directors, Regional Directors, Denver Service Center

From: Director

Subject: Federal Register Documents Procedures and Guidelines

As most of you know, a new system of review has been established within the Department of the Interior for all Federal Register publications. Because of this review, notices have taken a longer turn-around time to publish than in the prior Administration. I am aware that there has been much concern over this extended publication time and have been working with the WASO staff to create a smoother process.

Recently, Dan Smith was brought on board as my Special Assistant for Special Projects. One of his areas of responsibility will be to work with Ranger Activities to be sure that all documents requiring publication in the Federal Register are in the proper format, are complete and provide me and the Secretary's staff with sufficient information about the document to be published.

Although it is not likely that the Department will return to a system of "immediate" publication upon submitting a document, we do anticipate that the documents will be published in a much shorter time frame with your up-front preparation and with Dan's coordination within the NPS, the Assistant Secretary's Office and the Department. We anticipate shorter review in the future once the Department and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks are fully staffed and familiar with the many NPS programs that require notifications through the Federal Register.

Until such time, your efforts will be needed to make this review process flow smoothly. You can help in several ways:

- Be certain that all documents conform to the publication requirements of the Federal Register. You should refer to the Document Drafting Handbook created by the Federal Register. You may access the handbook via the internet at www.nara.gov/fedreg, select "Document Drafting Resources," and then "Document Drafting Handbook." Your documents should be neat and professional as well.

- Be certain that when submitting documents with specific dates mentioned, such as a meeting notice, allow sufficient time between your submission date and the meeting date.
We recommend submitting such notices 45 days in advance. For documents with non-specific dates, such as public comment periods, use the guidelines in the Document Drafting Handbook for having the Federal Register compute the date rather than indicating a specific date in your document.
Note: For consistency with DM 318, a public comment period should be at least 60 days but no shorter than 30 days to comply with the Administrative Procedures Act.
- All GMP, EIS and EA related documents need to be accompanied by a briefing statement. That briefing statement should include a bulleted summary of the issues being addressed, what House of Representatives District(s) could be affected/interested, what public or local government participation and input has been included in the preparation of the document, and an appropriate program contact name and phone number. A sample briefing statement has been attached. Please try to keep the briefing statements to one page, if possible.
- Copies of your document should not be distributed to the public or other agencies until your Federal Register notice has been approved for publication by the Department.
It is important that any issues of concern by the Department be resolved before the document is available to the public.

I am confident that these guidelines will enable you to get your program documents published in a timely manner. I welcome your comments on these guidelines and ask that you give us some feedback on whether they help or hinder your ability to do your job.

Now, and in the future, Dan Smith and Kym Hall in Ranger Activities will be striving to work closely with you and your staff to keep you informed on where your notices are in the review process and what you can do to help move them forward. Dan Smith can be reached at (202) 219-1688 or Kym Hall can be reached at (202) 208-4206.

We look forward to hearing from you on what we can do to make this process work most effectively for everyone. Again, thank you for your continued assistance and patience.

Attachment